



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 2263A-001
Thinking Sociologically
Fall 2024

In-Person

Instructor: Dr. Robert Nonomura

Department of Sociology

Email: rnonomur@uwo.ca

This is a DRAFT only. Please see the course site for the final version.

Course Description: An in-depth examination of many of the core ideas that sociologists use in their analyses, including the social, society, subjectivity, institutions, and others. Involves questions regarding how we approach these theoretically, in terms of empirical observations, and in terms of evaluating their impact on our current social order

Prerequisite(s): 0.5 Sociology course at the 1000 level.

Unless you have either the prerequisites or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in the course, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Anti-requisite(s): Sociology 2240E, Sociology 2270A/B, Sociology 2271A/B.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

This course is designed to provide you with a foundational understanding of the ideas, perspectives, concepts, and paradigms that have shaped, and continue to shape, the discipline of sociology. This involves not only surveying the theories of influential classical and contemporary social researchers but also considering how their ideas developed in the context of particular political, scientific, and philosophical movements. It is these theorists' intellectual responsiveness to these various social phenomena—that is, the sociologically imaginative quality of their mode of inquiry—that makes their work especially relevant to present-day social research, and that will constitute the focus of our course.

Thus, the course will lay an intellectual foundation for sociological thinking that students can use throughout their degree program and beyond. We will explore what "sociological theorizing" can teach us about today's society and how it might be used to gain deeper scientific and moral insight into our own beliefs, ideas, relationships, and interests. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify the historical and philosophical roots of sociological thought.
- Locate the role of theory and method in the process of social scientific inquiry.
- Critically analyze selections of primary texts written by influential 19th, 20th, and 21st century sociological theorists.
- Compare the relative strengths and limitations of various analytic frameworks for solving empirical, methodological, and epistemic problems.
- Connect core sociological concepts to “real-world” examples in contemporary society.

Course Material:

Reading assignments will consist of articles, book chapters, and knowledge mobilization resources. Links or PDFs to all resources will be provided via Perusall or linked through Brightspace. Some copyright costs may be involved in using this platform, but efforts have been made to keep these at a minimum.

There is no required textbook for this course.

Communication:

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL Brightspace site (<https://westernu.brightspace.com/d2l/login>) on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class.

Method of Evaluation:

The evaluation methods described in the course outline are essential requirements for the course.

Attendance/Participation: 5%

In-class attendance is vital to your success in the course. Lectures are designed to provide you with foundational tools for interpreting and mobilizing core social-theoretical concepts. The assigned readings serve as a common point of reference for developing those tools. You will need both in order to successfully pass the course. Lectures also cultivate mental focus in following long-form oral arguments, and they provide social and cognitive stimuli that enhances retention.

To incentivize engagement in these vital aspects of this course, your attendance will be recorded upon completion of a weekly attendance activity. Your attendance grade will be calculated as a proportion of your in-class attendances on Weeks 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12. If you have an unexcused absence, you can make up the missed grade by attending Office Hours the following week. If you require an extended absence (two or more weeks) on medical or compassionate grounds, consult with me once the issue is resolved and we can discuss a fair solution for your grade.

Critical Analysis Assignment 1 & 2: 12.5% each = 25%

These assignments provide students an opportunity to develop their skills in social-theoretical reading, conceptualization, analysis, and writing. Students will draw upon their understanding of the course materials

(readings and lectures) to respond to a series of questions about the course materials. These assignments are to be completed using the OWL Tests & Quizzes Tool. Due dates for Assignment 1 and 2 are September 28, 11:59pm ET and November 23, 11:59pm ET respectively. For each assignment, students are expected to submit the assignment by the deadline listed. Should illness or extenuating circumstances arise, students are permitted to submit their assignment up to 48 hours past the deadline without academic penalty. Should students submit their assessment beyond 48 hours past the deadline, a late penalty of 10% per day will be subtracted from the assessed grade. Students who require accommodations beyond this 48 hour grace period should request accommodation through Academic Counselling. Students who do not submit an assignment within 6 days of the original assignment deadline, and who do not receive an accommodation, will receive a mark of zero on the assignment.

Perusall Online Discussion: 15%

During each week's readings, you will have the opportunity to use the Perusall platform to comment on key passages, pose questions about the readings, and interact with peers who are doing the same. Of the nine eligible weeks in which to participate on the platform, you will be expected to participate during at least seven (of your choice). Your grade in this section of the course will be based on the consistency, quality, depth, and completeness of your engagement with the week's materials. Your overall mark for this component of the course grade will be calculated from the top 7 assignment scores you receive.

Midterm Exam: 25%

The Midterm Exam will be worth 25% of the final mark. It will be administered during class time on October 28. The test will consist of multiple choice questions. Course material from Week 1-5 will be eligible for testing.

Use of electronic devices and other written aids (notes, outlines, etc.) will not be permitted during the examination, unless otherwise stated. Instructors are permitted to designate one assessment per course per term as requiring supporting documentation to receive academic consideration. For this course the midterm exam has been designated as requiring supporting documentation. Students with an approved absence from the Midterm will be required to write a makeup exam during the departmental Midterm make-up midterm exam period (location and date TBD). The course professor or teaching assistant(s) may not be available to respond to questions during the makeup exam. Students should be aware that the make-up test will not necessarily be in the same format, be of the same duration, or cover the same material as the original test. Accommodations for the make-up exam date will be provided only with further approval from an Academic Counsellor.

Final Exam: 30%

The Final Exam will be worth 30% of the final mark. It will be administered during the Final Exam period. The exam will consist of multiple choice questions.

As with the Midterm, use of electronic devices and other written aids (notes, outlines, etc.) will not be permitted during the examination unless otherwise stated. Students with an approved accommodations for the final exam will be required to write a makeup exam during the departmental Final Exam make-up period (date and location TBD). The course professor or teaching assistant(s) may not be available to respond to questions during the makeup exam. Students should be aware that the make-up test will not necessarily be in the same format, be of the same duration, or cover the same material as the original test.

Note: Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating. This applies to assignments, the midterm, and the final exam.

Optional Bonus Assignment

Monday September 30 (Week 4) is the National Day for Truth & Reconciliation, a national day of remembrance in Canada. In recognition of this day, Western has cancelled all classes and encourages students to use the opportunity to reflect and learn about Indigenous cultures and settler colonialism in Canada.

In lieu of our class meeting, and in order to promote ongoing critical applications of our course materials to current social issues, I am offering a small optional assignment during Week 4. The assignment requires you to read a scholarly article and attend at an event of your choice during the National Day for Truth & Reconciliation. You will then provide written responses about a few related reflection questions.

Students who complete the assignment will be eligible to apply bonus marks in one of two categories:

- a) Credit for fully completing one of the nine Perusall assignments.
- b) A 5% increase in your Midterm grade.

Students who wish to complete this Optional Bonus Assignment must submit their assignments no later than October 6, 11:59pm. An document with full details of the assignment will be provided on OWL.

Course Schedule:

A tentative course schedule is outlined below. Please consult the Course Reading List on Brightspace for a complete list of assigned and recommended readings for each week.

Week	Date	Central Figure(s)	Topic
COURSE FOUNDATIONS			
1	9/9	Us!	Welcome to the Course
2	9/16	C. W. Mills, A. Sears	The Sociological Imagination
3	9/23	H. Martineau	Sociological Object(s) of Inquiry
4	9/30	<i>National Day for Truth & Reconciliation</i> (Online Mini-Module posted to OWL)	
COHESION, CONFLICT, & CONTRADICTION			
5	10/7	E. Durkheim	Social Solidarity and the Puzzle of Social Order

Week	Date	Central Figure(s)	Topic
-	10/14	<i>Reading Week</i>	
6	10/21	K. Marx	Ideology, Alienation, and Capitalist Production
7	10/28	You!	Midterm
8	11/4	The Frankfurt School	(Ir)Rationality and the “Dark Side” of Modernity
“SOCIOLOGY IS A MARTIAL ART”			
9	11/11	M. Weber	What Does it Mean to <i>Understand</i> ?
10	11/18	W.E.B. Du Bois	Thinking Sociologically About Race
11	11/25	P. H. Collins	Thinking Intersectionally About Sociology
12	12/2	L. B. Simpson, A. Gouldner	Beyond Sociology

Student Absences:

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, please follow the procedures below.

University policy on academic considerations are described [here](#). This policy requires that all requests for academic considerations must be accompanied by a self-attestation. Further information about academic considerations, and information about submitting this self-attestation with your academic consideration request may be found here. Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline.”

Students must familiarize themselves with the [Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#). Students missing course work for medical, compassionate or extenuating circumstances can request academic consideration by completing a request at the central academic consideration portal. Students are permitted one academic consideration request per course per term without supporting documentation. Note that supporting documentation is **always** required for academic consideration requests for examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar (e.g. December and April exams) and for practical laboratory and performance tests typically schedule during the last week of the term. Students should also note that the instructor may designate one assessment per course per term that requires supporting documentation. This designated assessment is

described elsewhere in this document. Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor of this course, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline. Supporting documentation for academic considerations for absences due to illness should use the [Student Medical Certificate](#) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation by a health care practitioner.

Students with an approved absence from an in-class test or exam will be required to write a makeup exam. Course professor or teaching assistant(s) may not be available to respond to questions during the makeup exam. Students should be aware that the make-up test will not necessarily be in the same format, be of the same duration, or cover the same material as the original test.

Artificial Intelligence:

Within this course, students are permitted to use AI tools exclusively for information gathering and preliminary research purposes. These tools are intended to enhance the learning experience by providing access to diverse information sources. However, it is essential that students critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize and develop their own ideas, arguments and perspectives.

The use of AI tools can serve as a starting point for exploring a topic, with students expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources of information and avoiding plagiarism. Assignments and all written materials (incl. Perusall posts) should reflect the student's own thoughts and independent written work.

By adhering to these guidelines, students contribute to a responsible and effective learning environment that promotes critical thinking, independent inquiry and all them to produce original written contributions. The same principles also apply to the use of translation software to support written assessments. *If you require support or assistance due to language barriers, please speak with me and we can work out a suitable solution.*

Academic Policies:

Please review the Department of Sociology [Important Academic Policies](#)” document

https://sociology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/courses/Academic_Policies.pdf for additional information regarding:

- Scholastic Offences
- Plagiarism
- Copyright
- Course Selection
- Absence from Course Commitments
- Missed Tests and Exams
- Religious Accommodations
- Accessibility Options
- Mental Health
- Gender-Based and Sexual Violence statement